

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~striketrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, and 11-15 and ADD new claims 16-20 in accordance with the following:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An information distributing method for distribution of information corresponding to a request from a user terminal, comprising:

receiving the request from the user terminal and transmitting, to the user terminal, headlines attached to respective information sets that may correspond to the received request and a way in which these information sets are handled in an information source as layout information;

displaying the headlines on the user terminal according to the layout information so the user can select any of the displayed headlines and receiving an identity of the selected headline from the user terminal; ~~and~~

distributing to the user terminal and displaying the information of the set corresponding to the headline the headline identity indicates; and

billing the user for the information of the set selected for display by the user.

2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An information distributing method for distribution of information corresponding to a request from a user terminal, comprising:

storing a preference corresponding to information required by a user;

receiving the request from the user terminal, and retrieving information indicating a way information sets are handled in an information source, corresponding to the request using the preference;

outputting the retrieved handling information as a way the information sets are handled in the information source as layout information to the user terminal;

receiving from the user terminal an identity of a selected information set; and

distributing to the user terminal and displaying information corresponding to the selected set; and

billing the user for the displayed information corresponding to the selected set.

3. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 1, wherein said information indicating the way the information is handled in the information source is information about a position in the information source and/or information about an importance in the information source.

4. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 2, wherein said information indicating the way the information is handled in the information source is information about a position in the information source and/or information about an importance in the information source.

5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An information receiving method for externally receiving necessary information, comprising:
externally outputting a request designating possibly required information;
externally receiving information as headlines attached to respective information sets that may correspond to the received request and a way the information sets are handled in an information source as layout information;
receiving an identity of a selected headline determined by a user according to the layout information; and
externally requesting distribution of the information of the set corresponding to the headline the headline identity indicates;
displaying headlines according to layout information; and prompting a user to select any of the displayed headlines and request a distribution of an information set corresponding to the selected headline.

6. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 5, wherein said information indicating the way the information is handled in the information source is information about a position in the information source and/or information about an importance in the information source.

7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A portable computer-readable storage medium storing a program used to direct a computer for distributing information corresponding to a request from a user terminal, by:
receiving the request from the user terminal and transmitting, to the user terminal, headlines attached to respective information sets that may correspond to the received request

and a way in which these information sets are handled in an information source as layout information;

displaying the headlines on the user terminal according to the layout information so the user can select any of the displayed headlines and receiving an identity of the selected headline from the user terminal; and

distributing to the user terminal the information of the set corresponding to the headline the headline identity indicates.

distributing to the user terminal and displaying the information of the set corresponding to the headline the headline identity indicates; and

billing the user for the information of the set selected for display by the user.

8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A portable computer-readable storage medium storing a program used to direct a computer for externally receiving of necessary information, by:
externally outputting a request designating possibly required information;
externally receiving information as headlines attached to respective information sets that may correspond to the received request and a way the information sets are handled in an information source as layout information;

receiving an identity of a selected headline determined by a user according to the layout information;

externally requesting distribution of the information of the set corresponding to the headline the headline identity indicates;

displaying headlines according to laying information; and

prompting a user to select any of the displayed headlines and request distribution of an information set corresponding to the selected headline.

9. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The storage medium according to claim 7, wherein

said information indicating the way the information is handled in an information source is information about a position in the information source and/or information about an importance in the information source.

10. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The storage medium according to claim 8, wherein

said information indicating the way the information is handled in the information source is

information about a position in the information source and/or information about an importance in the information source.

11. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An information distribution apparatus for distribution of information corresponding to a request from a user terminal, comprising:

a handling information retrieval unit receiving a request from the user terminal and retrieving handling information indicating a way information sets are handled in an information source, corresponding to the request;

a layout information output unit outputting to the user terminal a way the information sets are handled in the information source as layout information; and

an information distribution unit distributing and displaying information of a set corresponding according to the layout information to the user terminal; and

a billing unit billing the user for the information of the set selected for display by the user.

12. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) An information ~~distribution~~ reception apparatus for externally distributing necessary information, comprising:

a request output unit externally outputting a request for designation of possibly required information;

a layout information output unit externally receiving information as headlines attached to respective information sets that may correspond to the request and a way the information sets are handled in an information source as layout information; and

a displaying unit displaying headlines according to the layout information and prompting a user to select any of the displayed headlines; and

a distribution request unit externally requesting distribution of the information of the set corresponding to a identified headline.

13. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An information distributing method for distributing information corresponding to a request from a user terminal, comprising:

adding information indicating a way information sets are handled in an information source as layout information;

receiving a request for information from a the user terminal based on the added information; and

distributing to the user terminal and displaying the information of the set corresponding to received request; and

billing the user for the information of the set selected for display by the user.

14. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An information distribution apparatus for distribution of information corresponding to a request from a user terminal, comprising:

a handling information retrieval means for receiving a request from the user terminal and retrieving handling information indicating a way information sets are handled in an information source, corresponding to the request;

a layout information output means for outputting to the user terminal a way the information sets are handled in the information source as layout information; and

~~an~~ information distribution means for distributing information of a set corresponding according to the layout information to the user terminal for display; and

billing means for billing the user for the information of the set selected for display by the user.

15. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An information ~~distribution~~ reception apparatus for externally distributing necessary information, comprising:

a request output means for externally outputting a request for designation of possibly required information;

a layout information output means for outputting to the user terminal a way the information sets are handled in the information source as layout information; ~~and~~

displaying means for displaying headlines according to the layout information and prompting a user to select any of the displayed headlines; and

~~an~~ information distribution means for distributing information of a set corresponding according to the layout information to the user terminal.

16. (NEW) The method according to claim 1, wherein the information of the set is an article.

17. (NEW) The method according to claim 2, wherein the displayed information is an article.

18. (NEW) The method according to claim 5, wherein the information set is an article.

19. (NEW) The medium according to claim 7, wherein the information of the set is an article.

20. (NEW) The medium according to claim 8, wherein the information set is an article.